

Grace Groups Homework
"Sowing for a Harvest"

Mark 4:1–20

19 August 2018

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Do you have a favourite story that has significant meaning for you?

APOLOGETIC

2. Man is responsible for his response to the word of God while at the same time, apart from God's sovereign grace, man is spiritually dead and unable to respond. The texts below prove and illustrate this.

Romans 9:14–18—"What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills."

Exodus 8:15—"But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

Exodus 8:32—"But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go."

Exodus 9:12—"But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses."

Exodus 10:1—"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them.'"

Is this an important truth for Christians to address? Does this parable say anything to its importance?

3. How do you explain the reality that some are so receptive to the word of God while others respond much like water off a duck's back?

GOING DEEPER

4. Clearly the interpretation of this parable is key (v. 13). Why is this?

5. The sowing of the gospel in this world is key to the breaking in of the kingdom of God into our world. What does this say about the importance of sowing, hearing, and harvesting?

6. Consider the response of the soils to the seed in this parable. Self-examine and share how, even as a believer, you have sometimes been characterised by these different soils.

The Calloused Soil

The Consumer's Soil

The Crowded Soil

The Christian (Christlike) Soil

7. "Fourth soil people" are fruitful people. But fruitfulness may look different since some bring forth thirtyfold, others sixtyfold, and others a hundredfold. What do you think this fruitfulness is? Is there a connection between how we "hear" (v. 9) and how we "harvest"?

8. Consider and discuss practical ways that you and others in your Grace Group can sow the gospel in our world.

As you do your regular grocery shopping, please remember to add something to your trolley to donate to the Food for the Family ministry. Regularly used items include: rice (1kg or 2kg); juice; washing powder (auto or hand wash); cooking oil (750ml or 2-litre); peanut butter; syrup; jam; tea; coffee; sandwich spread; pilchards; tuna; cake flour; baked beans; butter beans; mixed vegetables; tomato and onion mix; other canned foods; Cremora or long-life milk; pasta; noodles; condiments (tomato sauce, mustard), etc.; sugar (1kg or 2.5kg); mielie meal; bath soap; deodorant (roll-on); toothpaste. Speak to Patson Ngidi for more information.